The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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The Old and the New.

The boundary between one year and another is really an imperceptible one and exists more in the imagination than in reality. We cross the line without any actual change in our possessions or in our capabilities. What we were on the one side largely determines what we may be on the other. There is no cutting the entail of the increment of character. Nevertheless, the sentimental feelings which spring into being at life's outstanding season is a real factor or may be made such. Not even the evanescent nature of New Year resolutions constitutes any serious argument against the making of such resolutions now. The fact that many past ones were unrealised or only partly realised does not preclude better and more complete success in the future. Hope springs enternal in the human breast. Were that not so progress would be a delusive aspiration, and the desire for better things flatter only to deceive. The weakness is not so much in the sentiment itself as in our disability to harness the sentiment to appropriate activity. Feeling is really the mainspring of all action, good or bad. The pity of it is that so much really good, unselfish feeling is allowed to go to waste. Were one tenth of the philanthropic aspirations of mankind practically utilised the brighter and better world of our hopes would soon be here. But how few people give adequate effect to feelings genuinely entertained! Ask the majority of people concerning their views of war and peace and they will unhestiatingly declare themselves on the side of peace and in favour of the abandonment of war. But why is it that the ranks of those organised for peace and ready to carry out " Peaceful Penetration " are yet so attenuated ? Is it not that the pleasure of right feeling is cherished for its own sake alone as if that were enough ? Yet there is no possible experience like unto that when strong and pure feeling has found its fitting vehicle and is embodied in concrete fact. The single deed or the collective organisation which means philanthropy in action yields a pleasure infinitely greater than the good intention which is nothing more. This has its bearing upon our church attendance and activities. We are continually meeting people whose good word and good will would appear to be freely ours. Our atmosphere of freedom, our readiness to assimilate new truth, our willingness to live and let live—these are admirable features, as all may admit. But why is it that this general sympathy is not transmuted into practical support ? Our churches are so frequently cursed by the presence of absentee members whose hearts are ours, but whose wills are strangely weak. There needs to be a striking change here, if the New Year of our fond hopes is to be one of greater zeal and accomplishment. Let us all consecrate ourselves anew and make of the new a far greater success than the old !

Notes of the Month.

We begin with this issue of the magazine a New Year and would take the opportunity of tendering to all our readers the best of seasonable wishes. May 1925 be for them and for our church a period of progressive activities. We would enter upon this new part of our career with hope and the heartfelt desire to be equal to our opportunities. As contributing to that end we would bespeak the continued support of our friends everywhere. We owe and here pay gratitude to all those who by their contributions and timely correspondence have made the magazine attractive and respected. It is our wish to be not less but more the organ of the Non-subscribing Church, in close touch with its many-sided operations and ministering to its more abundant life. If during the New Year we could increase our circulation it would both increase our influence and lessen our difficulties. We would draw the attention of our readers to the appeal in another part of the magazine in the hope that more generous donors will assist our finances. Already one church has undertaken to double its monthly copies and with a general increase all round we could banish care and go forward with cheerfulness and hope. May we not freely confide in the hearty readiness of our readers to do their part in this forward movement ?

* *

We deeply regret that the closing year 1924 was characterized by many serious cases amongst some of our oldest and most faithful members. Miss M'Alester was widely known and bore a name greatly honoured in our community. Her interest not alone in the congregation at Holywood, of which she had been so long a devoted member, but in our body generally makes her passing doubly sad. Institutions like the Domestic Mission and the Ulster Unitarian Christian Association will mourn the loss of a generous and devoted friend. Her cheerful and friendly disposition endeared her to all who knew her. Miss Dickson was also a lifelong member of our household of faith, and her early training in its tenets was reflected in many years' devoted service to our church and its different institutions. So, too, Mrs. Martin, of Dunmurry, belonged to an honoured family and was herself deserving of all honour for her long-continued fidelity and zeal. These represent but some of our recent losses, but they are sufficient to constitute a challenge to those who remain to take their rightful places in the apostolic succession of unselfish servants of God and man.

* *

Attention is again called to the celebration fixed for the early days of the New Year by the Congregation of Mountpottinger. Our readers should aequaint themselves with the history of this Congregation, and that is made possible by the timely and interesting account which we publish elsewhere. Although young in years, compared with some of our congregations, it can claim a distinguished career of useful work and the Jubilee Celebration should have the effect of strengthening and inspiring its present members as tney recall the strenuous and successful labours of their predecessors.

* *

Before 1925 appears it is hoped the second Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Calendar will be ready for our readers and we would ask for it the widest possible support. Its illustrations will make familiar some of our more remote churches and together with last year's calendar furnish a fairly full pictorial record of many church buildings. The more we get to know each other, and feel ourselves part of one organisation the better for our Non-Subscribing Church. But, valuable and interesting for ourselves, the new calendars may be made to show to many outsiders that we can boast to be members of no mean ecclesiastical body. Let our members see to it that this outside knowledge grows from more to more.

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Young People's Page.

BER-BAY-SHEATH.

There is a Greek poem,* composed nearly three thousand years ago, which professes to relate the history of the Gods. before the days when Zeus was king among them, the lord on Mount Olympus. It tells us that there was a time when Chaos, that is Disorder, prevailed everywhere and in everything. And Chaos or Disorder had a son who was Darkness and a daughter who was Night, and Night gave birth to Day. Along with Chaos there existed Earth, and as Chaos gave rise to Darkness and Night, Earth gave rise to Heaven; then Earth and Heaven, united, gave rise to Ocean, and to many formidable Giants. But Heaven forseeing that his sovereignty over created things might be imperilled by such powerful children, relodged them as soon as they were born within the womb of their mother, that is, as we say, within the bowels of the earth. Then the earth groaning under the pain of such a burden, armed her youngest son Cronus with a sharp scythe with which he destroyed his father and became sovereign in his stead. Then Cronus, fearing he might be served by his off-spring as he had served his father, swallowed up each of his children himself, instead of entrusting them for safe-keeping to their mother according to his father's plan. But his wife, not approving of this eating of infants, one day gave him a stone instead, and this he swallowed supposing it to be the latest of his children. At the same time, the infant god, whose name was Zeus, rescued by this cunning deceit of the stone, was conveyed away to a safe place and brought up in secret till he should become powerful enough to make war upon his father Cronus and so get the sovereignty for himself.

All this seems to us very ridiculous; still we can see when it is pointed out for us, that the makers of this myth were endeavouring to account for the origin of things; endeavouring to explain how the heavens and the earth, as they knew them, had gradually developed from the time when, as they supposed, Chaos or Disorder was supreme, and when out of Disorder there had proceeded darkness and Night; whilst the children of the god stored away within their mother Earth, and Earth groaning with the burdens of them, explains in the Greek way, the cause of the convulsions or mighty disturbances which they rightly observed to have taken place in the earth, by attributing these and all other events in nature to the actions and workings of the gods.

And now, if we turn away from the myths of the ancient Greek to the scriptures of the still more ancient Israelites, who also, in that marvellous book called the Book of Genesis, made a similar attempt (though with different result) to describe their notion about the beginning of things, we shall find them likewise, attributing all that took place in nature to the will and working of the Deity. But instead of attributing the course of nature and the forming of the world to a number of gods who were liable to be at cross purposes and even at war among themselves, as the Greeks did, the Israelites believed in an Almighty Creator who had no one like himself to thwart his will; so that instead of the ridiculous story of a god eating his children to prevent them from giving him trouble, they described how a Glorious God brought everything into being and reduced everything to order by his word.

The Book of Genesis opens with the words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." This is like the Greek mythology in one point and unlike it in another. Both myths start with heaven and earth; but whilst the Greek myth makes Earth and Heaven gods, and in some sense the creators of other gods, the Hebrew myth begins with God himself, who is the sole Creator of heaven and

earth and all things. And the next words of the Hebrew myth relate, that the earth was waste and void; which means much the same thing as the Greeks meant by saying that there was Chaos or Disorder. "Waste" may be said to mean *bare of vegetation;* there was no plant growing on the earth; and "void" may be said to mean *uninhabited;* there was no animated creature upon the earth. But the two words in the Hebrew language which have been translated in our Bibles by the words "waste" and "void" are not words in the ordinary sense at all; so that there are no two words in any other language that express exactly the same thing. They are rather exclamations or cries; and they should be pronounced *tho-hoo* and *bvo-hoo*. And we are to remember that in the earth that was tho-hoo and bvo-hoo, or bare of plant-life, and uninhabited, there was no light. All was darkness. Surely if a child were suddenly taken out of the light of this world, and left to wander about in a darkness in a world like that, he would begin to cry; and surely the noises he would make would be very like those two Hebrew words, "Tho-hoo! bvo-hoo!"

Then because there is very little one can do in absolute darkness, the Hebrew myth goes on to say that God created light. "And God said, 'Let there be light:' and there was light."

* Hesiod's *Theogony*.

† *Ber-ray-sheath* is something like the pronunciation of the Hebrew word for "in the beginning."

A fire-mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And caves where cave-men dwell,
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a race turned from the clod:
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

"*My Magazine.*"

God's Wireless.

The wireless telephone is an invention which perhaps more than any other has given widespread pleasure. It is an astonishing thing, on a Sunday evening in one's own home, away out in the country to listen to the living voice of the minister of Rosemary Street First Presbyterian Church and also to have the very great pleasure of listening to the choir, and to invalids unable to leave their homes, the boon is a great one. A few months ago, people who scarcely knew about electricity or the ether, now talk about wave-lengths, and know how to use their "listening-in-sets," as well as they know their every-day work. When they talk about wave-lengths they are hitting upon a truth which is the key of the universe, for our five senses are all related to wave-lengths, or as they are called sometimes "rates of vibration." Those for the ear, are sound, those for the eye, are light, and so on to the rest of the senses. Not only is sound conveyed by the wireless, but photographs as well, and we are told that the next thing that is coming is that we shall see sights by the wireless, then while events are taking place, a foot-ball, a race, we might watch it in the Cinema.

This brings home to us very strongly that around us, in a subtle medium, the ether, are sounds and sights and that they only need sufficiently sensitive instruments to respond to them. The Bible tells us of men who without instruments, but my means of powers they possessed, were able to see and hear at a great distance; prophets like Samuel and Elijah. Other sacred Books of the world tell us that also. To hear in this way is called clairaudience, and to see is clairvoyance.

Professor Oliver Lodge was the first to find out about the ether. He called it the Interstellar Ether, because it joins star to star, spreads through all space. He was working at another kind of wireless long before Marconi

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MODERN CHURCHMEN AND UNITARIANS

By S. H. MELLONE, M.A., D.Sc.

In January in the present year (1922) the Rev. Henry D. A. Major, Editor of **The Modern Churchman**, contributed to **The Hibbert Journal** an article designed to elucidate the views of Modern Churchmen by discussing the difference between their position and that of the Unitarians. This pamplet is a reprint, with a few omissions and additions, of an article by Dr. Mellone which appeared in the April number of **The Hibbert Journal** and offered some comments on Mr. Major's argument and an explanation of the Unitarian position. The Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association have authorised its publication by the Lindsey Press in the present form **for wide distribution.**

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Ulster Unitarian Christian Association,

35 Rosemary Street, Belfast

was heard of. For God had already given us a wireless. There is no instrument for broadcasting or receiving so wonderful as the human brain. Oliver Lodge made some very definite experiments which he published to the world, of sending thoughts to other people's brains, and he called that, Telepathy. The writer heard him explain Telepathy. The majority of people may not have paid much heed to it, though during all these years some have been practising it. The wireless is reminding people of it, how thought is a great power. There could be no idle words without idle thoughts. A word is only the utterance of a thought, and to think idly is as mischievous, to say the least of it, as to speak idly, for everyone must all the time be influencing the minds of other people. Christ laid great stress on the power of thought, on the power of evil thought, and so did the Apostles. We are told whatever things are pure, lovely, honest, of good report, to think on these things.

If the power of thought can be exercised by one person alone, that power can be greatly multiplied when exercised by several people together. Hence the values to the outside community of a congregation at worship, where all are brought into thinking on one subject, uniting in prayer, and if attention is paid, the noble thoughts of a hymn are made strong when it is sung.

People ask about Prayer. That is a very big subject. Subtler than the ether is the Great Ocean of Life in which everything lives and moves and has its being. Just as a word goes into the air, or the ether, and is picked up by the wireless, so our thoughts in prayer impinge, as it were, on the Divine Life, and bring back a response. The blessing of God is His answer to our prayer. We put up an ærial, a wire, to catch the sound-wave, but the man of prayer sends up a mental wire which brings down a flash from heaven ; by his thought he makes himself a channel for the divine blessing. By this mighty power of thought we are wielding a great responsibility, and we are living in a Universe so exquisitely balanced, that by the law of action and re-action, by that law which brings back to us the harvest of our sowing, we have to account to the Great Law, for the use to which our thought has been put, either as a help or a hindrance to ourselves and to others.

ULLIN.

THE COMING KINGDOM.

Text : " Thy Kingdom Come." St. Matthew, 6 : 10 (part).

[Address broadcast for Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, on Sunday Evening, December 7th, 1924, by Rev. H. J. ROSSINGTON, M.A., B.D. The two hymns, " Nearer My God, to Thee," and " Lead, Kindly Light," together with the Anthem, " O Saviour of the World *(Goss)*," were sung by the choir of the First Church, under the direction of the Organist, Mr. Albert Taylor, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M.].

A certain farmer went to a hiring fair in his district to hire a new hand. Seeing a man whose appearance he liked, he would have taken him there and then, but found he had no reference as to character. " Go away," he said, " and get a character. If you bring it with you in the morning you shall come and work for me." The next day they met again. " Well," asked the farmer, " have you got your character ?" " No," said the man, " but I've got yours, and I'm not coming."

The point-of-view expressed was plain and is entitled to respect. Such a working arrangement implied a two-fold obligation. If character was essential in the case of the hand, it was no less so with regard to the head. Only when found in both, was agree-

ment to be reached, and good work to result. Let either party fail to supply the needful character, it was useless to hope for success. The happiness and success of both participants in the common enterprise would depend upon character.

That is true of all modes of operation where co-operation is the law of life, and mutual trust indispensable. All who share in the scheme of service must supply the character the enterprise demands. Then, and only then, can its ultimate purpose be achieved. If true in the case of a farm, it is equally true in the case of a kingdom. Are we invited to become members of the latter, there are certain questions we have a right to ask. Is the head of such a kingdom entitled to our allegiance? Can we safely commit to him our destinies, and be absolutely certain of his wise and just control? Does he rule as absolute monarch or in accordance with some definite constitution? Upon the answers to such questions so much of vital import turns, that only the thoughtless could remain indifferent. Here, if anywhere, we need the satisfaction of a character assured and all-adequate to the need.

But when we, like innumerable sons of men about us and before us, find our deepest need expressing itself in this petition: "Thy Kingdom Come," does it not testify to the reality of the assurance of character? Certainly, so far as the ruler of the kingdom is concerned. His character has behind it an assurance than which no higher could be conceived. Firstly, it is vouched for by the life and work of Jesus Christ. The fact that the thought of such a kingdom of God was ever-present with Him, the centre of His preaching, the all-impelling desire of His personality, is proof positive of its goodness and greatness. Secondly, the character of God, as revealed by Jesus, is guarantee of the kingdom itself. Its head is no despot, subject to whim or caprice, but an All-loving, All-wise Father. He rules by law, yet it is law expressed in love, and seeking responsive love. Because Christians at all times have recognised the infinite assurance of the divine character as revealed by Christ, they have known no fear or hesitation when approaching him with the prayer that was Christ's. We, too, with the same entire confidence created in the first disciples, take the familar petition upon our lips: "Thy Kingdom Come."

A realm over which an infinitely loving God rules, that, then, is the age-long hope and the heartfelt desire of men. The passing of the centuries has not lessened its appeal or diminished its imperative need. But why has it not come, in response to long-continued prayer and for the satisfaction of widespread human desire? Did not Jesus himself, with radiant optimism, declare: "Fear not, little flock. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Since those words were spoken the little flock has become a mighty host, and yet the kingdom has not fully come. Even now, after so many centuries have elapsed, the universal petition of mankind implies that the kingdom is still longed for, has yet to come. Why must men even now continue to use the language of Christian aspiration and not venture to record a consummated fact of experience?

Perhaps, here, our opening illustration may help us. We recognised the justice of the farm hand's position. He had a right to look for character in the person whose service he was to enter. But had the farmer no corresponding right? He was surely not at fault in asking the man to find a character. And may not God's point of view be similar? The nature of the kingdom he intends and seeks to promote is one of service and demands whole-hearted co-operation. "And ye, if ye be willing and obedient, shall eat the good of the land." Precisely, because it is no despotism, but a kingdom of law and of love, it demands devotion and full-hearted fealty on the part of the subject. Until the latter has got his character, commensurate

with the character of its Sovereign Head, it is no true kingdom at all.

Obviously, then, aspiration is not enough. Fitting achievement must follow. Not even the divine willingness to found a kingdom could be fruitful until His will truly kindled our will. Jesus, who taught the disciples the petition :- " Thy Kingdom Come," also points out the way of its realisation. The language of aspiration finds its fitting culmination in language that implies, and calls for, endeavour, unceasing and whole-hearted : " Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

The kingdom of God, then, is to be broad-based upon the people's will. His purpose from the beginning was to found a kingdom, in which its subjects should be workers together with God. No constraint should be exercised, no compulsion enforced. All the resources of Infinite good-will guarantee its coming and ensure its final consummation. Yet it must be a kingdom morally-conditioned, since designed for moral subjects. Hence, God says to all who would enter and abide : " Go and get your character, then come and work with and for me." Mere aspiration is not enough, however felicitously expressed. The language of devotio is a vain repetition if it creates no corresponding movement of the will, determines no adequate reaction in conduct and character.

When long ago Jesus said to his professing disciples ; " The kingdom of God is among you " he uttered a truth as challenging for Christians to-day as it was for His first followers then. The appeal was, and is, to a consecrated purpose. Not by observation, said Jesus, would the kingdom appear. In vain will you merely pray for it. Yet it is your own for the gaining. God freely gives, but by you it must be fully possessed. Divinely promised, it needs to be humanly fulfilled. To you it is entrusted with all its infinite possibilites,—just as the seed is committed to the fostering care of the gardener. By your patient endeavour it will grow, from your loyal service it will gain in power and in good, upon your unceasing devotion and unselfish service it will ultimately depend. Thus, then the note of petition passes into, and culminates in, that of Christ-like character and conduct, until at long last " The Kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ." Amen.

The Ulster Hall Service.

This service, the third arranged by the Laymen's League, was held in the Ulster Hall, on Sunday, December 7th. It proved as successful as its two predecessors, in point of numbers, while some persons considered it the best of all, as regards its enjoyment and inspiration. The shortening of the service itself, and the unanimity with which all taking part kept up to time, marked an improvement on the gathering of last year. It was particularly encouraging to see how the members of our faith, from near and far, made for the one central meeting place and contributed their share of heartiness to the proceedings. The selected hymns seemed well-known and were sung with great spirit. The Moderator (Rev. S. E. Bowen) presided and his reading of the lessons and hymns left nothing to be desired. The Rev. J. G. Davies, of Comber, was responsible for the prayer and this struck the right devotional note. Both the addresses, brief reports of which we give below, were helpful and stimulating, and secured the earnest attention of the large congregation. All present felt the better for being present and so long as such a well-supported service is possible, there is abundant reason for its continuance. The admirable arrangements made by the Committee of the Laymen's League ensured the smooth working of the whole proceedings. The organist and the two soloists, Miss Daisy Craig and Mr. J. A. Laird, gave of their best,

while the united choir gave a capital lead to the hymns.

The Rev. H. J. Rossington based his address on the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount—"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs." This was the utterance of the world's greatest Teacher, concerned for the continuance of his teaching and the equipment of those to whom it was to be entrusted. It emphasised the fact that all teaching implies the right accord between the truth expressed and the recipient. Without things in common, no teaching however high and holy, could win its way and evoke fitting response.

Yet emphasis upon right method implied no want of confidence in men. That confidence was fully conveyed in the command : "Go ye out into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." The only natural inference from that command was that holy things should be given to all men since holiness corresponded to capacity, potential if not actual. To doubt men's ability to receive and respond was to give denial to the whole spirit of Christ's word and work. Faith in man as a child of God was fundamental in His teaching.

It was curious to note how much Christian theology had gone wrong here. Holding a conception of man as little better than a brute beast, naturally degraded and incapable of good, it had no incentive to give man that which was holy. On the contrary, if its theology was sound, there was every reason for withholding holiness, since so dog-like a creature was incapable of response. But practice had frequently ignored precept, and deed risen superior to doctrine. Despite the prohibition of Christ and the orthodox conception of man's degradation, the evangelical preacher had nevertheless conveyed to the most hopeless the precious message of Christ. The case of George Whitefield was instanced as illustrating the disparity between an unworthy conception of man and a Christian faith which ventured on the seemingly hopeless task of giving man holy things. John Wesley showed the marvellous results in the case of the Kingswood colliers converted by Whitefield. They would have been more marvellous still if there had been nothing in common between the convert and the Christian message. It required not the nature of a dog, but the capacity of a child of God to be won from sin to salvation.

It was no wonder that men like Robert Burns uttered their passionate protest against conceptions of man which so far from placing him a little lower than the angels degraded him to the level of the beasts. Looking within himself and about himself at his fellow-men, Burns saw the utter falsity and inadequacy of a view which perceived men as dogs. In his own case, despite moral lapses, he had never ceased to feel reverence for God and integrity for his fellow-men. There, in that reverence and integrity not peculiar to himself alone, was the earnest of the holiness which was man's supreme destiny. It was easy for Burns, when realising the manner in which theology had misrepresented man to pass to kindly and tolerant thoughts of the Devil himself. Perhaps he, too, was not so black as he was painted. He had capacity for better things. In that conclusion Burns was in harmony with Origen and other early Christian Fathers, who held the belief that the Devil would ultimately find a place for repentance.

Yet while the practice of the evangelist, and the protest of the peasant-poet, did much to discredit the base conception of men, it required something more, viz., the formulation of a better and more inspiring theology in accord with the mind of Christ. This was done by our own great teacher, Dr. Channing. Brought up under the influence of earlier orthodox doctrines, he came to see their unchristian character and to repudiate their right to speak in Christ's name. The moving conception of the dignity of human

nature runs through all Channing's writings, and is the inspiration of all his preaching. The grandeur of human nature, its attraction towards, and ability to accept, holy things, is still the master-motive of the Christian preacher. Without ignoring sin, or betraying any inability to see men in their actual condition, the thought of what men potentially are and actually may become, gives to us today our message and our truly Christian mission.

Rev. E. Savell Hicks, speaking on the subject, "A Basis for Life," quoted the passage "In this is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit," and added that the test which was here described was the test of work and the test of merit. No human enterprise, whatever it might be, could do very much until it was brought to a practical basis, be it a house or a business, a novel or a sermon, or whether they were going to run a Parliament. They had got to have some foundation, some idea on which they were to build, some originating or starting point. It was very much the same with human life. They had to work on a basis to work from: if they did not they would be like houses built on shifting sand. What was that basis to be? There must be a basis for the human thought and for the human conduct. It was often said people nowadays were less religious than were our forefathers. Personally he did not think they were. Of course all depended upon their definition of religion. They could not settle the question of religious feeling by means of statistics. There was an enormous interest in religious problems as was proved by the fact that prominent newspapers devoted much space to articles dealing with spiritualism and to articles by Church dignatories on social and ecclesiastical problems—the relation of the Church to economic and industrial problems. That very astute gentleman, Horatio Bottomley, would not have devoted the space to such questions in his publication if he had not known the demand existed, nor would any journal.

The average man was not indifferent, but he was puzzled by the multiplicity of Churches; puzzled by their quarrels; puzzled and pained by their blatant inconsistencies; puzzled by their hating each other for the love of God; and annoyed above all at their rooted conservatism of method and of expression. After all, who of them could help being interested in religion in the big sense of the term? They were all mixed up in the general destinies of the human race, with all its tangled problems and troubles and perplexities. What was behind it all; what was it about, and whither was it rushing? Was there purpose and love behind it? Was there wisdom and personality producing all these phases of life and activity? What of the other worlds and other systems that floated around them in space, flung on the purple depths of the universe like seed from a sower's hand? What was their relation to all this? Where did it end, or did it end at all? A man may not go to church, but he had to shape his course all around this. He had to live and he had ultimately got to die. How could he help being interested and speculative concerning these things? Therefore, if he be interested, if he wanted to know, even if he could find no certain answer, if he had only so much religion in his heart and soul, he was up against perplexities.

The fact was that religion had harped too much on the code of fear and terror, and too little on the code of love and service. There had been too much of the cry "Save yourself; flee from the wrath to come;" too little of the cry "Save your brother and your sister from the trouble that now is." A good many people had come to imagine religion was a case of making peace with heaven, and leaving earth—poor, suffering, sinning earth—to look after itself. That was not Christ's method. The last thing He thought about was self. The formulas

of His wonderful message of love and service have been a disaster. The soul of His religion had been shut up in a hidden room in the midst of a very vast conglomeration of ante-chambers. They were bidden to do this, to say that and repeat the other before they could begin to be admitted to the inner shrine of worship. Each of them held the same eternal truth from a different angle ; each worked toward a self-expression. Very often the human efforts were foolish and wrong. Men did evil—they harmed others, they murdered, they stole, got drunk, betrayed their trust—all under the delusion that they were attaining self-expression. What they all had to realise in life was that they were there not only to express and attain their own decrees, but that they were part of an enormous plan and scheme—God's plan ; God's scheme.

They were either on the side of the things that are past, or on the side of the things that shall be. If their way and God's way came in conflict then their way was out for a bad accident. They had got to try and understand something of the business of the universe ; that was their great apprenticeship. They had got to make God's way their way. Jesus, in Gethsemane accomplished the great spiritual triumph of bringing the reluctant will into line with the eternal purpose. He saw and knew that the progress of the world demanded toleration. Passionately He desired life, easily He could have escaped death, but the human desire found itself against the Divine call of sacrifice and after the agony of conflict came the cry "Not My will but Thine." When that spirit enters the human heart the shadows flee and there is light.

[Owing to lack of space, and the necessity of publishing early, we are obliged to hold over Temperance Notes and various Reports, etc.]

A November Holiday in Amalfi.

[PART II.]

We were fortunate in finding ourselves in Amalfi, on November 30th, St. Andrew's Day, and as he is the Patron Saint of the place the day is observed as a general Festa followed by fireworks and illuminations in the evening. The procession is supposed to leave the Cathedral at 11 o'clock, so that hour found us established on the balcony of a house facing the Duomo. Punctuality is not an Italian characteristic, but there was plenty to amuse us in the gay scene below. The centre of the Piazza was occupied by a temporary bandstand, decorated with flags, and garlands, while all around were fish, fruit and vegetables stalls, for in addition to the Festa it was market day, and the piles of lemons, oranges, and tomatoes, figs, persimmons, and peperoni made a brave show of colour in the blazing sunshine. As 12 o'clock struck the big doors of the Cathedral were thrown open and the procession began to descend the long flight of steps leading down to the Piazza. First came youths clothed in white surplices with green collars in two long files, keeping back the crowds on either side, then in the centre came a group of men in scarlet and gold, carrying a pink and yellow striped canopy, under which walked the Cardinal, followed by innumerable Canons, in purple robes, and tall tiara-shaped head dresses. Then came a life size bronze-seated figure of St. Andrew, borne on a platform, hung round with little silver fish, this was followed by a group of little boys in grey with black caps, these were the orphans of the war, now adopted and supported by the Commune of Amalfi. The procession was wound up by the Holy Sacrament under a wonderful lilac canopy, borne on six staves, surmounted with waving plumes. This was a present from Amalfi emigrants in America to

their native town. Many in the procession carried lighted candles, and it was altogether a marvellous sight, a gorgeous riot of colour, and I could well believe our hostess who assured us that in all Italy we should never see such another Procession. Much wine is made in the neighbourhood, in the vineyards scattered over the hills, and this is the way it is brought down to be bottled or exported. One hears so much of the loveliness of Ravello, that I imagined I had discounted all possibilities, but the reality was beyond anything, I could have conceived. Going there on foot however, from Amalfi, is a bigger affair than Bædecker would lead one to suppose, and as I did not start on my first expedition until after the 12-30 lunch I had only about half an hour to spare up there. I wanted to be back at S. Caterina before dark so after coffee on the terrace of the hotel Palumbo, I did not attempt more than visiting the Cathedral (1086), a fine Romanesque structure, with a magnificent pulpit, and opposite to it an Ambo with a representation on it in Mosaic of the whale swallowing Jonah, and restoring him to the upper air. The principal doors are of bronze with figures of saints in relief; they remind one. though on a smaller scale, of the wonderful doors in Florence. On this first expedition I had taken the driving road both up and down, which in parts, owing to a tremendous storm of rain the week before, was more like the bed of a mountain torrent stream than a road, but on the second occasion I started at 10 o'clock, intending to find out the mountain path for myself and spend the whole day on the heights. A friendly inhabitant of Atrani showed me where it branches off the carriage road, beginning with the steepest ladder of steps I ever saw. Before I had toiled up very far I heard a sweet child's voice singing below, and soon I was overtaken by a little girl of 8 years of age. When she heard where I was going she offered to act as my guide, saying she could show me a more direct way to the Cimbrone Palace, my first objective, than the ordinary public path. I gladly accepted, but when she led me out on the bare mountain side I was conscious that one ought to have nailed boots or else bare feet like my guide, to make it safe, for it was rock climbing we were about, rather than following a path. However, the bad bit did not last long and we soon came to wonderful caverns in the rock and finally to her father's farm, where we found him hard at work, with two other members of his family.

Then I had to see the cows, and then true to her word my little guide brought me to a lovely chestnut wood to the very door of the Cimbrone Palace. It was now after 12, and as a notice on the gate states that the gardens are only open from 10 o'clock to 12 o'clock, I was afraid I had missed my chance. However, Guseppina scoffed at the idea that we should not get in, and when in response to her knocking the portress arrived it only needed a very little persuasion to gain admittance. Here is the terrace built out over the face of the mountain up which we had come. The pictures give no idea of the splendour of the view. The lunch provided by Signor Gambardella proved ample for two, and as the sun was absolutely scorching we partook of our meal in the little temple which gave a pleasant shade without obscuring the view. Lunch finished we left the gardens and my guide escorted me towards the Hotel Belvedere. Just before we parted we met her mother, such a fine handsome woman, and after many compliments on both sides we said farewell. After coffee at the Belvedere I paid another visit to the Duomo and then went on to the Palazzo Rufola. This edifice begun in the 11th century is one of the best preserved and most ancient palaces in Italy. It is in the Saracenice style, and the court is in the form of a beautiful cloister. The gardens are well kept up and in this

respect offer a great contrast to the neglected ones of the Palazzo Cimbrone. It was during his stay at Ravello that Wagner composed in these gardens the 2nd Act of Parsifal. My third visit to Ravello was under very different conditions to my first two. November 29th, is Thanksgiving Day for the landing of the Pilgrim fathers in America; good citizens of the United States always celebrate it with a banquet, and the five representatives of that nation at St. Caterina invited me to join them in an excursion (Ravello) to drink to the health of the King of Italy, the President of the United States, and Ireland in romantic Ravello. The hotel Belvedere well known to several of the party was notified by telephone the day before to do their level best for a luncheon at 1 o'clock, and it was arranged to start in carriages at 9-30. No adventures happened until we were about half way up the valley of Arrani when we perceived the narrow road ahead of us blocked with laden carts and on our driver going to inquire the reason we were told that blasting was in progress on the bend of the road above us, and we must wait until the charge was exploded. Soon there was a dull roar followed by the tinkling of a little bell, the signal that we might proceed, so with no other impediments we reached Ravello where the one male member of the party who had scorned to take a seat in one of the carriages, was anxiously awaiting our arrival. Most of us went on to Cimbrone Palace, to enjoy again those enchanting views, and then we all foregathered at the Belvedere where we found great preparations for the banquet. The sun was too hot for us to have it on the terrace, and after the hour spent at the Cimbrone, and the walk to the hotel which is at the extreme other end of the Ravello, we were all glad of the cool and lofty diningroom. The table was exquisitely decorated with the brilliant little Cramoise Superior Rose, and trailing greenery something like our smilax, with a big bowl of other roses in the centre. The lunch was first rate although Signora Caruso had not been able to provide a turkey or pumpkin pie at such short notice. Her husband is a wine grower and produced some bottles of his 1908 vintage, a most excellent white wine, but as no Thanksgiving Banquet could be complete without champagne the sweet was accompanied by a bottle of Cingano and it was rather amusing to observe how very appreciative of wines were these citizens of Prohibitionist America. Signor and Signora Caruso took part in the toast and then the whole party adjourned to the terrace for coffee. After inspecting some of the improvements now being made in the hotel, Signor Caruso proposed showing me one of the very old churches of Ravello generally closed to the public and sent one of his children to fetch the key, the interior is completely bare but the walls show traces of once having been covered with frescoes now almost entirely perished or obliterated. He then accompanied me to the Piazza del Duoma where we took leave of our genial host. Some of the party returned by carriages, the others were led down a wonderful gorge by Mr. King who knows the country thoroughly. This path led us through the little town where the streets are even steeper than those of Almafi, and often are actually tunnelled through the rock.

The terrible landslides last spring did great damage in Amalfi and its neighbouring villages. The beautiful terrace of the Cappucini Monastery, with its orange groves above and below was entirely swept away, and there was much loss of life in Vettica and Conca di Marino. But Santa Caterina, being built on the solid rock, was untouched. Signor Gambardella has set up a motor car, and can now meet his guests at Vietri, so there is no longer the danger of being stranded there,

or cooped up in the noisy bus. In the words of Longfellow—

> " Sweet the memory is to me
> Of a land beyond the sea.
> Where the waves and mountains meet.
> Where, amid her mulberry trees,
> Sits Amalfi in the heat,
> Ever bathing her white feet
> In the tideless, Summer sea."

The Non Subscribing Presbyterian

AN APPEAL.

At the meetings of the General Synod of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, a report and Statement of Accounts of the Magazine were submitted. Attention was drawn to the financial aspect, and an appeal was urged upon the Ministers and Laymen for increased support. Two suggestions were made in the course of the discussion which followed, one being that our Congregations should be asked to be responsible for a certain number of copies monthly, according to the stipend payers, and another was the formation of a Subsidy Fund from which the deficit each year could be drawn. Seeing that the Magazine has served the denomination for a considerable number of years, and through the generous kindness of private friends has made no appeal to the Community, we think that if an effort could be made in all our Churches to double the circulation, this would help considerably to lessen the financial burden.

We have much pleasure in recording the responses to the appeal for the Magazine and we trust that other friends will readily follow the lead which these donations represent. Subscriptions should be sent to the Editor, Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A.,B.D., Ardeevin, Cadogan Park Belfast, or the Business Agent, Rev. G. J. Slipper, 7 Trevor Hall, Newry.

Miss Bruce, Belfast ..	£2	0	0
Miss J. E. Bruce, Belfast	2	0	0
Miss Hutton, Belfast ..	1	0	0
Mrs. M'Kay, Belfast ..	1	0	0
Miss S. Miniss, Dromore	0	10	0
Miss T. Miniss, Dromore ..	0	10	0
Mr. Robert Campbell, Belfast	0	10	0
Miss Corbett, Newry ..	0	3	0

Historical Notes.

MOUNTPOTTINGER UNITARIAN CHURCH.

Mountpottinger Unitarian Church and Sunday School grew up undesignedly out of the labours of a few persons moved by the spirit of Christian well-doing. Without any thought of the eventual outcome of their work a small band of people full of faith, who were distressed at seeing the number of uncared-for children in the streets of the Mountpottinger district, began in May, 1862, to collect boys and girls in order to give them treats and some simple unsectarian religious teaching. They had the sympathy and assistance of the late Francis Ritchie, Esq., who had placed at their disposal on Sundays a room in Messrs Ritchie's Felt Works. At the outset the neglected young pupils were almost unmanageable and for a year or two the difficulties were great. Gradually, however, the perseverance coupled with the kindliness of the teachers established order. The little Sunday school then began to attract more particularly children who had received some previous education; and instruction in the rudiments of reading and writing, which had been added at first, was discontinued as no longer wanted.

The leader of the workers was the late Mr. Robert M'Calmont, F.C.S., who filled the office of Superintendent. In the early days Mrs. W. B. Ritchie and her governess, Miss Nesbitt, came to take a share in the teaching. Most of the little band at the beginning belonged to York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, but members of other Christian denominations were asked to co-operate. As need arose from time to time for more teachers young men and women connected with the Second Congregation in Rosemary Street came forward, notably some members of the Davidson family. Mr. Francis Ritchie, and on his death his son, Dr. W. B. Ritchie, who were also of the Second Congre-

gation, gave their warm support, and when the school outgrew its quarters Dr. Ritchie provided a much larger room. In the course of time the teachers belonging to other churches gave up their duties, and the school went on under a staff of workers who were all Unitarians. The next development took place when the Superintendent began to conduct at intervals religious services after the school closing hour, which were found to meet a need in the district.

In 1873 after 11 years of progress there were 160 children and 22 teachers on the roll, and the school had again outgrown its accommodation. At this period the Rev. J. C. Street came to visit it on behalf of the Northern Sunday School Association, which took an interest in its work. In the course of his morning inspection he announced that he would give an address in the afternoon and would like to see the parents of the children. A congregation numbering 180 assembled, and from that time a well-attended religious service, conducted in rotation by different non-subscribing ministers in and around Belfast, was held regularly every Sunday following afternoon school.

A feeling already existing for some years that it was necessary to have a commodious schoolroom and a church built now rapidly gained strength. Plans were prepared involving a total cost of £3,000, and in September, 1873, a Committee with Mr. James Davidson as Secretary, and Mr. Robert M'Calmont as Treasurer, issued an appeal to the supporters in the district and the general Unitarian public on behalf of a Building Fund. Dr. Ritchie presented an excellent site and headed the list with a subscription of £100. £50 was contributed by the B. and F. Unitarian Association. When promises amounting to about £1,000 had been secured it was decided to proceed with the school buildings, and the foundation stone was laid on May 16th, 1874, by Mrs. W. B. Ritchie in the presence of a large and representative company.

It was intended that the schoolroom should be used in the first instance both for the Sunday school and for divine worship, and on its completion the Opening Services, conducted by the Rev. D. Maginnis of Stourbridge, were held on January 3rd, 1875. The Rev. Professor Orr, of Comber, and the Rev. J. A. Crozier, of Newry, officiated on January 10th and 17th. A sum of £110 15s. was obtained for the Building Fund by the collections on these first three Sundays.

The speeches at the stone-laying ceremony explained the principles on which church and Sunday school were based. They were to be Christian, unbound by any creed, free to seek and to follow the truth, free to propagate the truth as they conceived it. The trust deed has accordingly the character of an open trust. In devotion to the idea of independence the congregation pronounced against presbyterial association with other non-subscribing churches of the district, but this did not interfere with close informal co-operation arising from community of spirit.

In the course of later years the church came to be known for descriptive convenience as Mountpottinger Unitarian, and not merely Mountpottinger Church. While this name expresses the adherence of the church to the Unitarian principle of religious liberty, and correctly indicates the type of Christian belief and the "doctrine of works," in which free enquiry has confirmed successive ministers and their people, it does not denote the existence of any dogmatic tests for pulpit or pew, or of any restrictions on their religious progress.

An account of the events in the history of the church must necessarily be brief and incomplete. The first settled minister was the Rev. David Thompson (1875-9) who took charge on the opening of the new building. He was succeeded by J. J. Wright (1879-83); Walter Reynolds (1884-88);

W. Holmshaw (1888-93) ; J. B. Barnhill (1893-5) ; W. J. Davies (1896-1903); J. Worthington (1904-14) ; and M. Watkins, in charge since 1915. In these men the church has had a series of able and earnest ministers.

The first year in the Rev. D. Thompson's time was marked by the establishment of a library and reading room, open to non-members ; and by the starting of a Mutual Improvement Association, which flourished greatly and left lasting influences on its members. The Association and library were accommodated in a separate room capable of seating 70 to 80 persons which had been erected in contiguity at the rear of the schoolroom.

After some years it was found to be beyond the power of the congregation to raise the large sum necessary for building the church alongside as at first intended. But with the open-handed assistance of Mr. Thomas Hay Ritchie and Mr. (afterwards Sir) S. C. Davidson, the room at the back was made suitable for the sunday school and the main building was fitted with pews. This took place in the Rev. J. J. Wright's time. Mr. Wright had a gift for sunday school work and became widely known as editor of "Young Days."

The work of church and sunday school went on steadily for a number of years, the buildings being now adequate for the requirements. In the time of the Rev. W. J. Davies, who was an attractive and popular preacher, increasing attendances at the services pointed to the desirability of enlarging the seating capacity of the church. This was effected by reconstructing the schoolroom and connecting it up with the church by removal of the dividing wall, thus bringing into the church the present transept. The cost was £550, of which £400 was raised by means of a bazaar. The provision of a new separate schoolroom was kept in view, but could not be undertaken at the time.

Soon after the settlement of the next minister, Rev. J. Worthington, the wife of his predecessor, Mr. Davies, died, and her uncle, Sir Edward Durning Lawrence of London, intimated his desire to erect a schoolroom as a memorial to her. The present building, of which he beneficently defrayed the whole cost, was the result. At the same time the church vestibule and cloakrooms were added, the expenses being met by a donation from the late Misses Riddel, so well-known for their widespread liberality. To the planning of schoolroom and vestibule great attention was given by Miss Jeannie Davidson, an able personality, who was intensely devoted to the welfare of church and school from the time when she taught in the felt works until her death.

There was another important event during Mr. Worthington's ministry. When the Non-Subscribing organizations in the North of Ireland combined in 1909 the congregation of Mountpottinger carefully examined the Constitution of the new United Church. Finding it to be entirely in harmony with their own trust deed, and that it permitted full maintenance of the traditions of their own church, they entered heartily into co-operation, and the church is now associated with the Bangor Presbytery. The congregation subscribed £300 towards the new Sustentation Fund.

In the time of the Rev. M. Watkins, the present minister, the outstanding occurrence besides the unveiling of the War Memorial Tablet has been the raising of an Endowment which adds £55 per annum to the income of the church. This was an effort to lessen the constant strain on the resources of the people which is found in the most loyal congregations when composed mainly of working class people. The full benefit hoped for in this respect has unfortunately not been realised owing to unavoidable increase of expenses.

By the death of Sir Samuel C. Davidson in 1921, the church lost a member and friend who ever since its establishment had taken a warm in-

terest in its work, and whose liberality in practical assistance was unremitting. To his generosity were due among other things the organ and the "Sirocco" heating stoves which served so long in church and schoolroom.

The names of the church and school officers may be appended.

After the transfer from the felt works, Robert M'Calmont continued as Superintendent of the Sunday School till 1882, thus completing 20 years unbroken service from the beginning. James M'Williams, Henry Napier, James Orr, John Allen, Blakely Kennedy, and the present Superintendent, E. R. Jackson, followed in order.

H. M. Ward was the first Secretary of the Congregation, and there succeeded James M'Williams (1879-85); James Davidson (1886-1905); and Dr. Munn, M.D., appointed in 1906 and still in office. The Treasurers have been James Davidson (1875-85); Henry Napier (1886-1912), and E. R. Jackson still acting.

It will be noticed that the church has commanded the devoted service of its officers for long periods. In particular, mention may be made of James Davidson and Henry Napier, who each for over 30 years gave a continuous share of his time and labour for the benefit of church and sunday school.

H. T.

Obituary.

Dunmurry Congregation has lost a valued member in the death on Dec. 12th, of Mrs. Martin, of Sicily Villa, Finaghy, widow of Wm. Martin, a former Treasurer of the said Congregation, and the eldest of the large family (5 girls and 5 boys) of the late William Roberts, of Auburn, Dunmurry, who died in December, 1857, and of his wife, Sarah Carmichael, who died in June, 1905. This family

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was greatly attached to the First Presbyterian Congregation, of which the late Rev. Henry Montgomery, LL.D., was an outstanding minister, and Mrs. Martin was no exception in her zeal for its welfare. She set a fine example in her early and regular attendance at Divine Service, the present minister (Rev. J .A. Kelly), believes, that, in the 28½ years he has occupied the pulpit, Mrs. Martin has not been a dozen Sundays absent, even counting the last few Sundays of her illness. She was 23 years old when Rev. Dr. Montgomery died, then she lived through the ministry of 30 years of the late Rev. J. H. M. Scott, and at her death, she was over 28 years a member under the present minister. She often referred with pride to her membership of the Choir in the days when the late Mrs. Crozier, then Miss Montgomery (Rev. Dr. Montgomery's youngest daughter), was a member. In her long and useful life she enjoyed the best of health, her short illness at the end was that incidental to old age. She had only one child, Mr. Robert Martin, of the firm of Messrs. Harold Moore, Ltd. The services in connection with the funeral on December 15th, to Dunmurry Graveyard, were conducted by Rev. J. A. Kelly, assisted by Rev. H. J. Rossington, of First Presbyterian Church, Belfast. Mr. Kelly also made appropriate reference to the deceased in the services of Sunday, December 14th.

MISS MARGARET H. DICKSON.

The above lady, who had been ill for weeks with a serious and incurable disease, passed away at her residence, 31 Eglantine Avenue, Belfast, on December 4th. Although of advanced age she was able to go about up to a few weeks ago, and was in attendance at the First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, quite recently. Originally residing in the neighbourhood of Dromore, where her father was a well-known and highly respected physician, she later, like her brothers, Mr. Robert Dickson and Mr. John M. Dickson, settled in Belfast. The former pre-deceased her by a few years, while Mr. John M. Dickson remains to mourn her loss, the sole survivor of a family of ten. The early attachment to Unitarianism continued throughout her life, and Miss Dickson was a most regular and devoted member of the Rosemary Street Congregation. Both by education and natural ability she was conspicuous, and courageously held views and defended them when these were not popular. Of a kindly disposition, she helped many good causes, and the Domestic Mission often experienced her generosity. The funeral took place on December 5th, the service at the house, and also at the graveside in Dromore, being conducted by the Rev. H. J. Rossington. The latter also made a very feeling reference to the congregation's loss on the Sunday morning following the death.

MISS M'ALESTER.

Our Congregation at Holywood has lost by the death of Katherine M'Alester, one who was honoured and beloved by all, not only for her own sake and for her many services to her church, but also as the last living link with the memorable 57 years ministry in Holywood of her father—the late Rev. Charles James M'Alester. Her bodily strength had been failing her latterly, but she kept to the last moment her remarkable vigour of mind, her keen interest in affairs, and especially the affairs of her own household of faith. She passed away rather unexpectedly but very peacefully on Wednesday morning, December 10th, at the age of 82. Her long life was one of sturdy loyalty to her own church, and so far as opportunity offered, to our cause generally in the North of Ireland. In earlier years, she taught in the Sunday school and played the harmonium both in the school and church. Until quite recently she collected the stipends for the congregation. She

was a valued member of the Church Committee, in which capacity her shrewd sense forwarded business and her ready wit often preserved good temper. She was a very regular attendant at morning worship on Sundays, having made a resolution that no sort of weather should keep her from her church except heavy snow. Sickness she rarely had to reckon with, for to her knowledge, she had never spent a whole day in bed throughout her life. For many years she acted as local collector for the Orphan Society. She was keenly and actively interested in the work of the Belfast Domestic Mission to the Poor, Stanhope Street, collected for its funds and was one of the oldest members of its Committee, whose meetings she regularly attended almost to the last. Following in the footsteps of her father, she was a life long temperance worker, and a staunch supporter of the Ulster Unitarian Christian Association in the foundation of which in 1876 her father took a leading part. She was also a familiar figure at the annual Sunday School Conferences, which she never missed attending.

Miss M'Alester was a woman of marked and strong individuality. No one who knew her would think of comparing her with any one else, for there was none to compare her with. She was just herself, and we shall not see her like again. She was decided in her likes and dislikes, she had a strong, shrewd, practical mind and at the same time one of the kindest hearts that ever beat. She had also a strong irresistible sense of humour of the comic side of things and people. Above all she was distinguished by the strength of her religious convictions, her sturdy loyalty to her church, combined with a wide charity for the sincere religious convictions of others. She will be greatly missed not only in her beloved Holywood, where she spent all her life, but throughout our churches in the North of Ireland.

The funeral took place on Friday, December 12th, and the services, both at the house and by the graveside were conducted by the Rev. Edgar Lockett. On the following Sunday morning a commemoration service was held in the church and was largely attended. Mr Lockett preached from the words "Well done, good and faithful servant." At the close the congregation stood in silence in their pews as a mark of their respect and affection for Miss M'Alester and of their sympathy with the bereaved. Afterwards the Church Committee met and passed a resolution of condolence with Mr. Charles James M'Kisack and his brothers and sisters in the death of their aunt, and recording their sense of the congregation's great loss.

A sister of Miss M'Alester was the wife of the late Rev. J. K. Montgomery for many years minister of Matthew Henry's Chapel, Chester.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—Those who remember previous debates held by the Guild, were agreeably surprised at the keenness displayed in the discussion "That Progress is an Illusion," at Mountpottinger, on 10th December. The positive case was ably introduced by Mr. Tate, who was well supported by Mr. Leyland. The negative side was taken up by that seasoned controvertialist Mr. J. H. Gilliland, seconded by the Rev. A. L. Agnew. A lively discussion followed in which Mrs. M'Kay, Mrs. E. R. Jackson and Messrs. N. Woolley, E. R. Jackson and G. M'Bride distinguished themselves and was only brought to a close through lack of time. Mr. Tate's reply to the whole discussion was the feature of the evening. He is a master of the art of hitting hard without wounding and gained his proposition by 21 votes to 16, many abstaining from voting on either side. Tea was served at the close of the wordy-warfare and was enjoyed by all. Active preparations are being made for the production of another operetta in March. Rehearsals will have begun before this is in the hands of our readers. There are still some vacan-

cies in the chorus, and members of our churches who would like to help in this jolly work—and have the necessary capacity for singing—are asked to come down to the Central Hall on Friday nights, where they are assured of a warm welcome. The Annual Soirée will be held in the Central Hall, on Saturday, 10th January. Tickets are now ready, and same can be had from the Local Treasurers, or from the Hon. Secretary, Miss Montgomery, 86, Royal Avenue. This is usually one of the most enjoyable of the Guild's functions. Those who do not wish to miss it should secure tickets without delay, as the number is limited.

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Belfast : First Church.—A successful entertainment which was promoted by the Women's League, was held in the Central Hall, on Wednesday, December 3rd. It took the form of a Bridge Tournament and Whist Drive and attracted the personal support of friends from other congregations. The whist section proved the most popular and the upper room allocated to it was filled by a cheerful company not too intent upon the play to have time for chat and merriment. In the large Central Hall, the bridge-players found equal enjoyment, and spent their evening most pleasantly. In each case a well-arranged and admirably-served tea proved a very acceptable interlude. Both immediately before and on the evening itself the officials and members of the League were active in securing the satisfaction of their guests, and were left in no possible doubt concerning the success of their efforts. Later, the handsome prizes, generously provided by various friends, were graciously handed to the winners by Mrs. James Moore (of Merlyn). A hearty vote of thanks was accorded her and the other friends who in various ways had contributed to a very enjoyable evening, by Mrs. Robert Campbell, and the Rev. H. J. Rossington.

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Ballee.—This congregation has sustained a great loss in the lamented death of Mrs. Margaret Stewart of Ballygallum. After much bodily weakness, cheerfully borne, she passed away suddenly on the 8th December, respected by all in a wide neighbourhood, and much beloved by those who knew her best. The deceased lady was of our household of faith and by her generous help and steady attendance up to the last, showed a deep personal interest in all that concerned our church life here. Much sympathy is felt for her bereaved family in their loss of a good mother. She was a sincere friend to all of goodly intent, and her piety of the unostentatious kind that is the chief charm of all the truly religious. She made " a happy fire-side clime that's the true pathos and sublime of human life."

* *

Downpatrick.—The course of Sunday Evening addresses, whose opening discourse we reported last month, was continued during November by the minister, the Rev. John Begg. Passing from Carlyle's " Sartor Resartus," which formed the subject of the first address, Mr. Begg later dealt on November 16th and 23rd with the works of Professor Henry Drummond and George Eliot. Full and interesting reports appeared in the columns of ,'The Down Recorder," and from these, kindly sent to us by a Downpatrick correspondent, we perceive the suggestive and stimulating character of the preacher's treatment. Such thoughtful discourses are capable of achieving much good. Firstly, they call attention to the writings of past thinkers, who have pondered over the problems of human life and attempted their solution. Secondly, they indicate that there is no real line of demarcation between religious and profane literature, where the writer deals with fundamentals and is concerned with their bearing upon man's best life and thought. Professor Henry Drummond, did very much good in interpreting the new scientific thought of the last century

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and in demonstrating that it was fully capable of spiritual interpretation. We wish our Downpatrick minister every success in his endeavours to reach and inspire the thoughtful.

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Mountpottinger.—The Christmas Cake Fair and Sale of Work was held on Friday, December 12th, when the opening ceremony was performed by Mrs. Robert Ferguson under the Chairmanship of the Moderator (Rev. S. E. Bowen). Fortunately the day was fine, and the sale was well patronized, so much so that although the accounts are not finally closed they show that close on £100 was realized. To all who by their presence, patronage and purses, helped us on this occasion we tender grateful thanks. In another column reference will be made to the Jubilee Celebrations and we hope for good congregations and a crowded public meeting.

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